

if Barbara wasn't in the Constitution when it was first written, she made sure that once she got in, she stayed in it all the way.

She also did all she could as a lawmaker and as a teacher to give future generations of Americans for all time to come equal standing under that Constitution. That's what she was doing when God called her home, working with the students at the University of Texas Lyndon Johnson School of Public Affairs.

In 1994, in one of the most enjoyable moments of my Presidency, I was proud to give to Barbara Jordan the Nation's highest award to a civilian, the Presidential Medal of Freedom. I noticed her wearing it today. And it touched me so to know that she is now going to a place where her rewards will be greater.

As Ann Richards said, if we're all going to tell the truth today, Barbara Jordan made every one of us stand a little straighter, speak a little clearer, and be a little stronger. She took to heart what her Grandpa Patten told her when she was a little girl. "You just trot your own horse, and don't get into the same rut as everyone else." [*Laughter*] Well, she sure trotted her own horse, and she made her own path wide and deep.

Let me close with these lines from a poem I love by Stephen Spender. I understand Barbara loved it, too, and liked to read it aloud. I can't read it as well as she would have, but you'll see it could have been written about her. "I think continually of those who are truly great, who from the womb remembered the soul's history, who wore at their hearts the fire's center. Borne of the sun, they traveled a short while toward the sun, and left the vivid air signed in their honor."

Barbara's magnificent voice is silenced. But she left the vivid air signed in her honor. Barbara, we the people will miss you. We thank you, and Godspeed.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:36 a.m. in the Good Hope Missionary Baptist Church. In his remarks, he referred to Rev. D.Z. Cofield, pastor, Good Hope Missionary Baptist Church; Barbara Jordan's sisters Bennie Crisswell and Rosemary McGowan, and her brother-in-law, John McGowan; Mayor Bob Lanier of Houston, TX; former Gov. Ann Richards of Texas; and Liz Car-

penter, distinguished alumna of the University of Texas.

Remarks on the Arrival of the Space Shuttle *Endeavour* Astronauts at Ellington Field in Houston

January 20, 1996

Ladies and gentlemen, I am so glad that I happened to be in Houston and at the airport at the right time. I just want to take a minute—I know you came to see this fine crew and their families and to celebrate with them—but I just want to say on behalf of the people of the United States, we are very proud of this mission, proud of this crew. We were thrilled by its success, and we're glad to have them home.

And let me just make one plug to—I know that I'm preaching to the saved here—but I want to make one plug for the space program. You see all of our friends and allies from Japan here celebrating their participation in the person—where is he—of Mr. Wakata. We thank him.

Our space program is an important part of our partnership for world peace. It is an important part of how we relate to and work with the Japanese, the Russians, and others in building a more cooperative, safer world for the 21st century. Our space program is also an important part of research we do in trying to solve medical mysteries and environmental mysteries. NASA has been a major, major force in helping us to figure out ways to save our planet Earth as we accommodate more population growth and more economic growth. So I ask all of you, remain steadfast in your support for America's investment in space and in our future together with our friends and allies throughout the world.

Thank you. God bless you.

Welcome home, gentlemen. Job well done.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:20 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Japanese astronaut Koichi Wakata. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Statement on the 100th Birthday of George Burns

January 20, 1996

Hillary and I extend our warmest wishes for a wonderful birthday to one of the most talented entertainers of our time. George Burns' knowing smile and dry wit have touched the hearts and funny bones of three generations. His impeccable timing breathed life into the mundane, and his clever humor crystallized many ageless skits. His youthful attitude, now a century old, continues to inspire us today. We send him all our best on this happy occasion.

Exchange With Reporters Prior to Discussions With Foreign Minister Ehud Barak of Israel

January 22, 1996

State of the Union Address

Q. Is your State of the Union all ready, Mr. President?

The President. Just about ready.

Q. Some people are expecting a campaign-style speech.

The President. I don't think so. What I'm going to say tomorrow night is that the state of the Union is strong, but it can be stronger, that I am absolutely confident and optimistic about our ability to meet the challenges that our country faces, and I'm going to say what I think they are and what I believe we should all do about them.

Q. Are you going to reach out to the Republicans to try and get things done?

The President. Absolutely. I did last year, and I will again. I think, you know, we have differences, but we should attempt to resolve those differences. And we should attempt, where we can't resolve them, to set them aside and do what we can do. Remember, throughout our history, the system that the framers of the Constitution set up demands honorable, principled compromise.

Public Debt

Q. Did Dick Arme's comments concern you?

The President. Well, I don't think we should default on the debt. I think that would

be a terrible mistake. It's an unacceptable thing for a great nation to do, and we've never done it.

State of the Union Address

Q. Is this going to be longer than last year?

The President. Tune in. I suppose it depends on the applause, doesn't it? *[Laughter]*

[At this point, one group of reporters left the room, and another group entered.]

Middle East Peace Process

Q. Mr. President, I'm a correspondent of the Israeli television. Do you hope to reach an agreement between Israel and Syria by the end of '96?

The President. Well, of course, that's up to Israel and Syria. All the United States has tried to do throughout this process is to try to do whatever we could to encourage the process of peace. And I think the timetable has to be driven by the progress that is made. That is entirely up to the parties.

Q. What are you doing in order to speed up such an agreement?

The President. We will do whatever we can, whatever we're asked to do, within limits to—within the limits of our ability, to try to make it possible for the parties to succeed. But the timetable is entirely up to the progress of the substance of the negotiations, and that is entirely up to the parties. The United States—I think we've had some success in the last 3 years because we have not tried to dictate terms or anything of that kind. We have only tried to be helpful and to try to support the parties as they search for peace. And if you look at the results of the last 3 years, that is the appropriate posture for the United States.

Q. Do you hope to initiate a meeting between President Asad and Prime Minister Peres of Israel? Is it one of your wishes for the months ahead?

The President. Well that, of course, will be up to them. If it is helpful in getting them to the point where they can make a peace, obviously, that would be a good thing. But that is a—like every other part of this process, ultimately that is up to them.

NOTE: The exchange began at 2:15 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks,